

# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE FIELD NOTES

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER ♦ FEBRUARY 2012



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## Welcome to the General Land Office



Welcome to the winter edition of *Field Notes*, the newsletter about the state's oldest and most diverse agency—the Texas General Land Office.

In this edition is an article about our newest and most innovative nursing home for Texas veterans and their spouses. It's going to revolutionize the way we care for our nation's heroes.

Another story inside describes the dedication of the fourth Texas State Veterans Cemetery, constructed at Corpus Christi, which complements its sister facilities at Mission, Killeen and Abilene.

The Division Focus story in this issue is about Mark Loeffler, the agency's talented Communications Director who is always looking for better ways to

serve the public.

Our annual Save Texas History Symposium was such a rousing success that C-SPAN chose to cover it. See the story inside for more details. Also related to the symposium is a story about the official poster created for the event and to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Texas Revolution.

Thank you for your interest in the Texas General Land Office. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Field Notes* and as always, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us. Phone numbers and email addresses are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Sincerely,

  
Jerry Patterson  
Commissioner

## More Than 1,000 Gather to Dedicate Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery

**T**exas veterans turned the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor into a celebration on December 7 as many hundreds gathered to dedicate the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery in Corpus Christi.

"We are here today to consecrate this land for our Texas veterans," said Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Texas Veterans Land Board. "Today, this site becomes hallowed ground in honor of their sacrifices."

Veterans eligible for free burial in the newest Texas State Veterans Cemetery were joined by elected officials, community leaders and top military brass drawn together for the dedication. The keynote speaker was retired U.S. Army General Marc Cisneros, a true South Texas native son. Ram Chavez and the Corpus Christi Veterans Band provided inspiring patriotic melodies, and a surprise flyover by Training Air Wing 4 out of NAS Corpus Christi

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# Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery Dedication

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Commissioner Jerry Patterson addresses Corpus Christi-area veterans and their supporters at the state veterans cemetery dedication.

and submitted by Nueces County to the VLB. An \$8.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs allowed the VLB to transform the site over the past year into a veterans cemetery worthy of our soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen.

Burial at the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery is a privilege that cannot be bought, only earned through service. Veterans and their immediate family are eligible.

The cemetery will be developed in phases and upon completion will have more than 31,500 grave sites. The first phase of construc-

tion created 4,808 grave sites. A committal shelter allows services with full military honors and a walkway provides space for future memorials. In addition, a memorial wall allows those whose remains are elsewhere to be honored. The spirit of service and patriotism lives everywhere at the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery.

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Since taking office in 2003, Patterson has overseen the greatest expansion of state veterans services since World War II, including the construction of the state's first four Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, located in Killeen, Mission, Abilene and Corpus Christi.



Knights of Columbus react to the "present sword" command.

"Take pride in the ground you stand on today," Patterson said. "Your commitment to our veterans built these hallowed grounds into a resting place worthy of their sacrifice."

Gifts and grants of cash, benches, or organizational monuments can be accepted for Texas State Veterans Cemeteries. Please call Jack Slayton, Director of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Program at 512-463-5977 if you would like to make a donation to a Texas State Veterans Cemetery.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Cemeteries and other veterans programs offered by the Texas Veterans Land Board, call 1-800-252-VETS (8387), or visit the Veterans Land Board website at [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com).



Patriotism was the order of the day.

## Did you know ...

... the Land Office Archives holds the Mexican government notice of approval for Moses Austin to settle 300 American families in Texas?



Many veterans organizations took part in the dedication.



# Historical Artwork Honors Texas' 175th Anniversary

The General Land Office has turned to art to help preserve the history of Texas. The oldest state agency commissioned notable Texana artist Gary Zaboly to create a special work of art to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Texas Revolution. His vivid depiction of Texians at the Battle of San Jacinto was featured on the official poster of the second annual Save Texas History Symposium, held on October 1. Proceeds from the sale of the poster will support the program's mission to promote Texas history education and preservation of historic maps and documents.

"I'm honored to work with an artist of Gary's stature," Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. "He expertly captured the fierce spirit of resistance in Texian fighters at that defining moment in Texas history. The strength of resolve depicted in this painting is exactly the kind of spirit that made Texas great."

Entitled "Onward," Zaboly's painting portrays a diverse band of armed Texian fighters cresting the rise on the San Jacinto battlefield, charging toward an unsuspecting Mexican army commanded by Gen. Santa Anna. Posters can be ordered from the online store at [www.savetexashistory.org](http://www.savetexashistory.org).

"Definitely a most worthy cause," said Zaboly from his home in New York. "History is always a good cause to preserve and perpetuate."

Born in New York in 1950, Zaboly is recognized by many as the preeminent illustrator of Texas history. He has illustrated dozens of Texas history books and articles, and has also written books on history. His artwork is on permanent exhibit at the Alamo, and his pieces have been acquired by such prominent collectors as the Custer Battlefield Museum in Garryowen, Mont., the late Congressman Charlie Wilson and pop musician Phil Collins.

The "Onward" poster is available for \$10 at the Land Office. It measures 20 inches by 30 inches, and the artwork alone is 16 inches by 20 inches. To purchase the poster, please go to <http://www.glo.texas.gov/cf/ArcMaps/ArcMapsDetail.cfm?intCounter=90089> for online sales or call 512-463-5277.

All proceeds benefit the Save Texas History program, which is entirely supported by private donations and sales of collectible items.



Texian revolutionaries crest the rise at San Jacinto while the Mexican army slumbers, in Gary Zaboly's "Onward."

## About Commissioner Jerry Patterson

Jerry Patterson was born in Houston, Texas on November 15, 1946. He graduated from Texas A&M, Class of 1969 and received his commission in the United States Marine Corps. Volunteering for duty in Vietnam in 1972, Patterson was later designated as a Naval Flight Officer and served in Marine fighter squadrons until his retirement from the Marine Corps Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1993.

Five consecutive generations of Patterson's family have served our nation in time of war.

As state senator for District 11 (Harris, Galveston, Brazoria), Patterson's major legislative successes include passage of the historic concealed handgun law, a constitutional amendment allowing home equity lending, the state coastal management plan and the creation of the Texas State Veterans Home Program. A tireless advocate for his fellow veterans, he chaired

the first Veterans Affairs committee in the Texas Senate.

Since his election as Texas Land Commissioner in 2002, Patterson has modernized and revitalized the Texas General Land Office, the oldest agency in Texas. He has diversified and increased the Permanent School Fund, made Texas a renewable energy leader, protected state lands and overseen the greatest expansion of veterans benefits since World War II.

Jerry resides in Austin and has four children: twins Samantha and Cole, born in 2004, and Emily and Travis. His daughter Emily is an attorney working in Kosovo for an agency funded, in part, by the U.S. State Department. His son Travis is a graduate of Texas A&M, where he was commissioned as a Marine Lieutenant. Travis recently returned from serving his 2nd tour of duty in Iraq as a U.S. Marine attack helicopter pilot.

# Loeffler Always Looking to Improve

For Communications Director Mark Loeffler, change has been constant since joining the Texas General Land Office in 2003. Some changes were driven by new technology, others by Loeffler's tendency to do more with less. One of his first actions was rebranding the Public Information Office as the "Office of Communications"—a more encompassing term that better describes his goals.

"I wanted this job since day one," Loeffler said. "I asked Commissioner Patterson if I could do this job if he got elected. I was very clear from the beginning that that's what I wanted to do."

Loeffler first honed his communications skills doing issue-focused media relations for then Senator Jerry Patterson. His Red Cross work also taught him much, especially a stint at New York City's emergency command center after the 9/11 attacks. Even though Loeffler was neck deep in Patterson's run for Texas Land Commissioner, the latter told him to get to New York City, where he would remain for weeks in a high-pressure role with the Red Cross.

By the time Patterson was ready to take the helm of the Land Office, Loeffler was eager to tackle his new role, but he could not have foreseen the changes that would occur.

"In 2002, there were no webcasts," he recalled. "Media and communications have changed so much. We don't have press conferences anymore unless it's a gigantic story. Reporters want it all electronically now. I've seen a dramatic shift in the way information is delivered from the agency to the news media."

The Land Office was the first state agency to broadcast and webcast meetings and press events. Communications used satellites to send live video and professional-quality background footage to any station with a satellite dish. David Little, Director of Media Services at Communications, often walked TV personnel through procedures for receiving the feed while other staffers hand-delivered footage to local stations.

"The cool thing is, we can adapt," Loeffler said. "There's always such a lot of energy here and a drive to do something innovative."

A state agency doing satellite broadcasts was unheard of pre-Loeffler, but it's already obsolete technology. It became standard to send footage via the Internet, and once again the Land Office was the first state agency to use the new technology, known as File Transfer Protocol. Communications also pioneered the use of "QR" codes on Land Office publications, allowing anyone with a smartphone to view them over the Internet.

Of all the things he's accomplished at the Land Office, Loeffler is proudest of the agency's new website. With the help of everyone in

revamp of the contents, organization and navigation features took nine months.

He's also proud of "This Week in Texas History," a popular series of 30-second radio shows about lesser known tales of Texas. In five years, Media Services has

crafted over 200 episodes on a shoestring budget, using Land Office talent for the speaking roles. The program is heard on radio stations in every major Texas market.

Other projects stand out for him, like the series of Save Texas History PSAs he directed at a replica of the Alamo built for the 2004 movie of the same name. Loeffler managed to get the PSAs—starring Commissioner Patterson—shown to an estimated 1 million people before screenings of "The Alamo." In the PSAs, Patterson calls for help to conserve historic documents at the Land Office.

"The Alamo shoot was nerve-racking," Loeffler admits. "We had everything ready to go, but the weather forecast was bad. We delayed it two weeks and it worked out great—perfect weather. Another GLO miracle!"

It was pretty much the same story for the "Gunny" shoot, a PSA starring fearsome Marine drill instructor R. Lee Ermey. "We were down at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio and there were torrential rains," Loeffler recalled. "By the time we had everything in place and Gunny showed up, it was perfect weather."

Hardly less stressful are regular events held by Communications, many of them originated by Loeffler. "In one year we'll do a Save Texas History Symposium, a Texas Coastal Expo, two Adopt-A-Beach Cleanups and usually a cemetery or veterans home groundbreaking or dedication."

Loeffler estimates 75 percent of his time is now devoted to overseeing fundraising efforts. When he first started at the Land Office, there was little education outreach and very few sponsorships or partnerships with businesses or communities. "The one thing I never thought I would do is fundraising," he said. "I feel like the fundraiser-in-chief for the agency. Adopt-A-Beach, Coastal Expo, the Symposium, Voices of Veterans, Save Texas History—all of it's driven by private funding."

As for what motivates him, Loeffler wants to be the best at what he does, but working with the Communications team gives him the most job satisfaction.

"So creative, so energetic," he said. "No egos here—everyone is willing to chip in. I am very spoiled. I keep asking things of my staff and they keep delivering."



Loeffler directs a scene for the Land Office at the set of the 2004 movie "The Alamo."



Loeffler speaks at the 2nd annual Save Texas History Symposium.

Communications and every program area at the Land Office, a user-friendly website replaced the old one, which had swelled to an unmanageable 20,000 pages. A painstaking



# One-of-a-Kind Texas State Veterans Home Dedicated

Multiple generations of veterans gathered in Tyler on November 9 to dedicate the newest state veterans home in Texas.

"Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home is a one-of-a-kind facility," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Veterans Land Board. "This home is nothing less than a model for the future of long-term care."

What makes Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home stand out is that it's the only state veterans home in Texas that consists of 10 cottages—each centered around an open kitchen—and one common building.

"The kitchen is the heart of any home," Patterson said. "Instead of one large, hospital-like facility, Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home draws residents together around the dinner table every day, just like at home."

Tyler's Texas State Veterans Home was built on 20 acres donated by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler with 65 percent of the construction costs paid for with a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and 35 percent with a grant from the VLB. Watkins-Logan-Garrison joins seven other Texas State Veterans Homes across the state in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen and Temple.



The University of Texas at Tyler Patriot Singers performed during the dedication ceremony.

The whole approach at Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home is revolutionary for long-term care of Texas veterans.

An open kitchen, dining room and large table are at the heart

of each of the 10 cottages. Family-style meals will be served at the table and residents can enjoy each other's company afterward in a large living room with a fireplace. This simple idea of having each cottage designed to feel like a home — not an institution — is what sets the home apart from the rest.

A total of 10 private rooms, each with its own bathroom, will flank the hearth. Each cottage will be set up as a "non-lift" facility, where overhead tracks with slings in each resident's room will provide safe transport of non-ambulatory residents from bed to bath.

Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home was named in honor of three local heroes, two Medal of Honor recipients and a Tusgee airman: Travis Earl Watkins, James Marion Logan and Samuel M. Garrison.

Texas State Veterans Homes offer a broad spectrum of health care services, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and certified, secured Alzheimer's units, each with its own secured outdoor courtyard.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Homes, please call 1-800-252-VETS (8387) or visit the Texas Veterans Land Board website at [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com). Or, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TXVLB>.



Members of the Korean War Veterans of East Texas Lee Roy Baty Chapter 286 participated in the ceremony.

## Save Texas History Symposium Aired on CSPAN 3

One of the more fascinating and little known dramas in Texas history enjoyed star treatment on CSPAN 3 when the channel aired a session from the 2011 Save Texas History Symposium.

Wharton pediatrician and "avocational archeologist" Dr. Gregg Dimmick told the story of the Mexican Army's retreat after the



Dr. Gregg Dimmick tells the story of the Mexican Army's retreat after the Battle of San Jacinto in a segment that aired on CSPAN 3.

Battle of San Jacinto in the segment, which aired November 27, December 3 and December 4 on CSPAN 3.

Dimmick was one of the speakers at the 2011 Save Texas History Symposium, held at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Cen-

ter on October 1. Proceeds from the annual symposium go toward the General Land Office's Save Texas History program, which promotes education and preservation of historic documents and maps.

Dimmick, author of *Sea of Mud: The Retreat of the Mexican Army after San Jacinto*, described how his research rewrote the history of the Mexican army's ill-fated 1836 retreat from Texas, in which more than 2,500 Mexican soldiers and 1,500 female camp followers became bogged down in the muddy fields of what is now Wharton County.

The entire United States will have the opportunity to see other segments of the symposium on CSPAN 3 throughout the year, because all the morning sessions were filmed. "Down here in Texas, we do our history right, and we want the entire country to know," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "Texas history is filled with stories of heroism and lessons for the future. The symposium highlighted several lessons, like the financial collapse of the Republic of Texas, as explained by Jim Beville. I think some non-Texans would be well served to pay attention."

If you are unable to catch one of the CSPAN 3 airings, you can view video and pictures from the event online at [www.savetexas-history.org](http://www.savetexas-history.org).

# Voices of Veterans Exhibit on Display at Old Land Office Building

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson celebrated Veterans Day with the opening of an outstanding Voices of Veterans exhibit called “Every Veteran has a Story to Tell.” The interactive, multimedia exhibit opened on Veterans Day (11/11/11) at the Texas Capitol Visitors Center in the historic Old Land Office on the Capitol grounds. The featured exhibit will run through September 2012.

The exhibit was produced by the Office of Communications, using the skills of the program area’s Media Services and Graphic Design divisions as well as the Voices of Veterans Coordinator for most of the work involved. It puts a face on the often anonymous men and women who have sacrificed so much for our nation.

“Our nation’s wars are well-known,” said Commissioner Patterson, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. “But hearing the gripping personal narratives from veterans of those wars—their experiences of leaving home, going abroad, facing combat and surviving—adds context for the public. These first-hand accounts prove that ordinary men and women, faced with incredible adversity, can accomplish extraordinary things.”

The exhibit includes a short video on the Voices of Veterans program. It also has two multimedia kiosks containing iPads loaded with 12 short videos narrated by former service members whose personal stories exemplify one of four central themes: courage, duty, fear and survival. The courage theme is depicted in the narratives of one Vietnam veteran and two World War II veterans, including Robert Bearden, who recounts his parachute jump onto the French coast of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

“I had no idea what to anticipate,” recalls Bearden. “We were told that we would not fly over any enemy anti-aircraft.” Reality proved much different, as he was wounded twice, captured by the Nazis and held as a prisoner of war.

Two World War II veterans and an Iraq War veteran share stories embodying the duty theme, including Millie Dalrymple, who felt a calling to serve as a Women’s Airforce Service Pilot in 1943 after learning of her husband’s death in a bombing campaign over



Visitors are met by this sight upon entering the Voices of Veterans exhibit. Almost everything seen in the photograph was created by the Office of Communications staff.

Europe. The fear theme is related in the accounts of two Vietnam veterans and one from the first Gulf War. Dr. Sharon Frederick recounts the ever-present dread associated with a possible gas attack by Saddam Hussein, saying, “... it was almost like an accepted fact—if anything happens we knew we weren’t going to make it.”

Intense tales of strength and endurance are demonstrated in the survival theme, with accounts from two World War II veterans and one Vietnam veteran and prisoner of war. L.D. Cox was one of only 316 survivors of the infamous sinking of the USS Indianapolis in the South Pacific. For four days, he faced exposure, dehydration and shark attacks with the 880 men who did not go down with the ship. In his narrative, he shares the painful memory of watching a friend just three feet away get snatched by a shark, never to be seen again.

The Voices of Veterans program is an oral history initiative of the VLB that honors veterans by documenting their powerful stories through thorough interviews. It has roots in the VLB-managed Texas State Veterans Homes, which provide long-term care for veterans. Many of those homes’ residents are eager to tell their stories, and more than a dozen have done so through the Voices of Veterans program.

“This exhibit shows the power of the spoken word to convey the complex emotions felt during wartime,” Commissioner Patterson said. “When you hear the stirring stories spoken by people who lived through deadly conflicts, it provides context for what you read in the papers or history books. You walk away awed by their service and sacrifice.”

If you’d like to help fund Voices of Veterans, please consider buying the 2012 Voices of Veterans calendar. This stunning, glossy calendar features 12 Texas veterans interviewed for the program, and highlights stories of fear, courage, duty and survival. Great for home or office, this collectible calendar makes the perfect gift. The cost is only \$13, which includes shipping. Please go to [www.voicesofveterans.com](http://www.voicesofveterans.com) to make your purchase.

For additional information on the Voices of Veterans program, visit the website at [www.voicesofveterans.org](http://www.voicesofveterans.org).



The 2012 Voices of Veterans calendar.



Fascinating items provided by interviewees are on display at the exhibit. One of the iPad kiosk video displays can be seen behind the life-size cutout of a Voices of Veterans interviewee.



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## Agency Newsletters

Veterans Voice

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/veterans-voice-September-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/veterans-voice-September-2011.pdf)

On the Coast

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf)

The Responder

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/responder-dec-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/responder-dec-2011.pdf)

Saving Texas History

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/\\_publications/saving-texas-history-winter-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/_publications/saving-texas-history-winter-2011.pdf)

Cabin Connection

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/Cabin-Connection-08-11.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/Cabin-Connection-08-11.pdf)

Adopt-A-Beach

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/aab-newsletter-fall2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/aab-newsletter-fall2011.pdf)

Voices of Veterans

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/vov-newsletter-winter-2010.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/vov-newsletter-winter-2010.pdf)

## Please give us your feedback

For comments or suggestions about this newsletter, please contact Paul Sturrock at [paul.sturrock@glo.texas.gov](mailto:paul.sturrock@glo.texas.gov) or call 512.936.1948.

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